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ABSTRACT

While teachers, administrators, and their schools are constantly being bombarded with demands for excellence, little attention has been paid to the role of parents to achieve high levels of learning with their children. An area of concern is the modeling parents can provide by placing high value on learning. Parents must become knowledgeable about and involved in current educational practices. School employees must find areas where parents can be directly involved in the schools, uniting them in a common cause such as improving school safety or tutoring below-level readers. They must help in educating parents as to the necessity of staying involved with their child's school through high school graduation. The purpose of this paper is to develop a literary review and a guide for parents outlining how they can support public schools. The guide offers suggestions for communicating with school personnel, providing resources to the school, and learning about school programs, standardized testing laws, and procedures. It also offers information regarding current instructional methods employed by teachers and the rationale for the methods. Appendices A and B contain a brief PowerPoint presentation offering guidelines to administrators for obtaining parent support. (RT)

SOLICITING SUPPORT FOR THE AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOL:
A GUIDE TO INFORM ADMINISTRATION AND EDUCATE PARENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Being a parent is an all-encompassing responsibility. A large part of parenting involves the responsibility of being teachers as well as nurturers. By becoming involved in the education of their children, parents send a message to their offspring that education is important (Griffith, 1998; Lontos, 1992). Parents are sometimes critical of public education, but researchers verify that relationships between parents and school personnel are integral to improving American public schools (Calcote, 2000; Jennings, 1997; Lewis, 1995). Most of the parents, however, who become involved in the schools are of high socioeconomic status (West, Rasinki, & Camb, 1990) or middle class, omitting a large segment of society (Rioux & Berla, 1993). Among that group are minority parents from at-risk communities (Elman, 2000; Inger 1992).

Results of a 1988 longitudinal study showed statistically significant differences in the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement according to race-ethnicity and family income, how achievement was measured, and the type of involvement (Desimone, 1999). Additionally, another study stated while 72% of schools with a low concentration of poverty reported that “most or all” parents attended the

school open house, only 28% of schools with a high poverty rate reported such high parent attendance (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998). The question then becomes how educators can assist in gaining support from all aspects of society in order to preserve a valuable icon of democracy, the American public school.

Schools are an important indicator of the well-being of a democratic society (Giroux, 1998). In general, public schools better reflect the diversity of American society than private schools (Center on Education Policy, 1998). Therefore, the problems in society are often reflected in public schools, particularly in the kind and amount of support parents give to schools. A definite link has even been found between parent involvement and student success (Desimone, 1999; Elman, 1999; Finn, 1998; State of Texas, 1999). One example of a successful effort is a Chicago elementary school which established a parental participation program serving third graders. Participating students' reading achievement improved by four months, and parents' interest in education peaked considerably (Hara & Burke, 1998). Such efforts prove that educators certainly must reach out to parents and members of the public to reestablish support for the public schools (Brandt, 1998). So critical is this issue, that the U. S. Department of Education established a broad-based coalition of parent and education groups in the Family Involvement

Initiative that facilitates cooperation of parents and families with schools and communities (Riley, 1994).

The purpose of this paper was to develop a literary review and a guide for parents outlining how they can provide support to the public schools. The guide offered suggestions for communicating with school personnel, providing resources to the school, and learning about school programs, standardized testing laws and procedures. It also offered information regarding current instructional methods employed by teachers and the rationale for the methods. Additionally, a brief PowerPoint presentation was produced offering guidelines to administrators for obtaining parent support.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Criticism about public schools in America has run rampant since the 1940s. Parents at that time voiced concern over issues such as lax discipline, progressive education, character education, and academic standards (Levin, 1998). The idea was that a school that serves the public should be responsive to students, parents and the public in general. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that this idea began to be replaced with the notion that all parents have strengths and can be empowered to take a

more active role in their children's education (Rioux & Berla, 1993). In the mid-1960s, many federal laws were enacted to see that parents had the right and obligation to participate in and evaluate school programs, especially those funded by federal dollars (Rioux & Berla, 1993). Suddenly, parents became more concerned about public schools. To understand their concern, an examination of the history of the American public schools is pertinent.

History of Public Education

The concept of public education dates back to the Massachusetts Bay Colony which established the principal of publicly supported universal education. Families could choose parochial schools, but all had access to a public school (Pipho, 2000). The American school became a symbol of the democracy which the colonists had long sought. By 1912, all state constitutions contained a clause on public education, calling for each state to maintain a free system of public schools open to all children of the state. After World War I, demands for higher quality education prompted more laws, and parents sought more control. A court decision in 1925 upheld the right of parents to control and direct their children's education, but it also upheld the right of the state to regulate public schools (Pipho, 2000).

During the colonial period, parents reared and teachers educated, and this attitude was pervasive until the 1960s and 1970s, when parents

were empowered to take a more active role in their children's education (Rioux & Berla, 1993). According to the Texas Education Code (1995), for example, parents have the responsibility to become partners with educators and to participate actively in educational programs. Unfortunately, parent participation has become woefully small.

Public's View of American Public Schools

Public opinion of the public school dropped dramatically during the last decades of the 20th century (Pipho, 2000). Some of their views are supported by statistics. A case in point is the St. Louis public school district, which recently lost its state accreditation, leaving the public to believe that their system was a failure and an “utter loss of taxpayer money” (Brown, 1999, p. B15). However, 97% of white parents and 97% of black parents nationwide recently agreed that public schools were one of the main institutions that created cohesion and social harmony among diverse groups of Americans (Center on Education Policy, 1998). This belief supports the theory that public education was and is the hope for the future, while refuting the perfidious thoughts of St. Louis taxpayers.

While public schools have been the bastion of hope for our democratic society, the public's view of the American public school

has changed only slightly in the past few years. In 1997, for example, 71% of parents favored reforming the existing public system and 23% favored an alternative system (Rose & Gallup, 1999). In 1999, however, the only slight change was 27% favoring an alternative system. Parents' forums conducted in 1997 suggested improving and strengthening things that educators in schools were doing and gave no indication of abandoning public schools or changing them dramatically (Rose & Rapp, 1997).

A primary concern was that schools were unsafe. In the 1999 Gallup Poll, 6 of the 17 areas listed by parents as problems in the community schools were related in some way to safety. Topping their list was the lack of discipline, second was fighting, violence, and gangs in school, and crime and vandalism were in sixth place. Ironically, hiring good quality teachers was seventh in the rankings. The results in a study of four affluent Illinois high schools showed that strong positive relationships among schools, parents and communities resulted in a lack of violence in the schools (Garlasco, 2000). In an analysis of what may have caused the tragedy at Columbine High School in Jefferson County, Colorado, it was noted that administrators, staff members, parents and agencies cared about the well-being of students, but were possibly working on separate agendas, thereby failing to bring students together in strong, solid relationships (Tirozzi, 1999). Roosevelt High School in Dallas, Texas occasionally organized informal parent security patrols on campus to ensure safety

(Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1997). This action followed a decision based on the observation that a lack of parental presence on campus resulted in increased gang violence. Size may also be a detrimental factor in the safety of schools.

Smaller schools are designed to be personal enough for teachers, students and parents to get to know one another well, thereby increasing safety in the school (Lewis, 1997). Results of a study of 122 elementary schools indicated the smaller the school and the class, the greater the student morale, student friendliness, and parent involvement (Griffith, 1998). In some instances, parents' concerns for safety are intertwined with discipline. Such was the case in Little Rock, Arkansas where a task force discovered that these two terms were interwoven in parents' minds (Sewall & Chamberlain, 1997). After conducting interviews with teachers, the task force learned that there was very little evidence that public schools in Little Rock were inherently unsafe, but 46% of principals, 52% to 65% of the teachers, and 70% of the community felt discipline was too lax. Seventy-one percent of parents in a radio survey stated that the major problem in schools nationwide was undisciplined and disruptive students (National Public Radio [NPR], 1999). An analysis of a national survey concluded that both parents and students saw some school practices and policies as significantly associated with school violence (Kimiveli, 1997). Overall,

personnel in affluent schools tended to take a low-key approach to school security and appeared to be concerned with public image (Garlasco, 2000).

In addition to modifying school practices and policies, many traditionalist parents feel the best approach to saving the American public school is what is commonly called “back to basics.” In a 1995 survey of parents, basic reading, writing, and math skills ranked at the top of the list of subjects absolutely essential to teach. Good work habits, the second place choice, ranked 9% lower. Advanced math and classic literature ranked amazingly low, indicating that in the public’s mind, less time should be spent on the creative subjects and more on structure (Wadsworth, 1997). More recently, 52% of parents thought schools had gotten too far away from basics (NPR, 1999). In another survey, 90% of parents listed traits such as honesty, democracy, acceptance of people, and moral courage as essential values to teach to students (Rose & Gallup, 1999), while other parents felt more strongly about allowing prayer in school (Langdon, 1999). As demonstrated from these various responses, parents often are not in consensus as to exactly what “the basics” include, causing mixed feelings which result in minimal support of schools (Rose & Rapp, 1997).

A feeling of disenfranchisement has caused some parents to relinquish their support of the public school. Many have resorted to home schooling, which has resulted in charges of elitism (Arai, 1999), and

others support an open enrollment system (Houle, 1999). Parents cite test score declines, increased funding without positive results, and high dropout rates as rationale for leaving the public school (Levin, 1998). Some parents, armed with a sense of world affairs, superior educations and well-paying jobs, are enrolling their children in international schools (Lynem, 2000). The Center for Education Reform (1998) points out that children of the poor and minorities have no choice about leaving, but must live with the public school because they have no power to change it. Other parents are concerned about the teaching of topics in school that in the past have been the responsibility of parents, such as sex education (Johnson & Immerwahr, 1994). The American Medical Association reported that Baltimore's school-based clinics which distributed contraceptives were overwhelmingly endorsed by parents. Over 63% of parents there approved the prescribing and dispensing of contraceptives, thereby demonstrating the vast range of opinions among parents regarding attitudes of sex education (Santelli, 1992). Lack of knowledge about other issues has added to the feeling of disenfranchisement.

In a survey conducted by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, most parents did not feel informed about state-mandated tests nor did they feel equipped to help their children prepare for them (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], 2000). In Austin, Texas a group of parents who

successfully campaigned for a health clinic in their elementary school, found confidence to participate in other activities, such as a workshop focused on improving test scores (Hatch, 1998). In New York, schools reminded parents of the importance of a good breakfast, especially during testing week, and reported testing information to parents in an understandable manner (Hoerr, 2000). Part of the Goals 2000 campaign established by the United States Department of Education includes a recommendation for learning compacts and resource centers to strengthen ties and establish a stronger environment for learning on the part of parents and students alike (United States Department of Education, 1994). A National Public Radio poll found most parents would even pay more taxes to improve public schools (NPR, 1999; NEA Today, 1999). The bottom line is support for public education must be rebuilt community by community, just as public education must be improved school by school while working at the same time to improve the overall system (Jennings, 1997).

As a result of the changing view of the American public, school personnel have seen less participation from parents in the school. Parents were more likely to attend events that featured some interaction with their students' teachers, such as parent conferences or open house, and most frequently these parents came from an area with a low concentration of poverty (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1998). A national

study of eighth-graders in 1990 statistically supported that half their parents had not attended a single school meeting during that academic year (Lynn, 1997), as did a subsequent study of eighth grade parents (Catsambis & Garland, 1997). A study of sixth graders yielded similar results (ASCD, 1997). A scholar in residence from Vanderbilt University felt conservative parents seemed alienated because they did not see their viewpoints represented in curriculum (Brandt, 1996). Their alienation may be a result of poor communication. In a three-year study conducted in New York, a significant relationship was found among school-home communication and parent involvement in the school community (Elman, 2000), indicating that the school's efforts in reaching out to parents played a large role in parental response (Rioux & Berla, 1993). Parents in inner-city school districts reported less contact with teachers than parents in suburban area schools (Rioux & Berla, 1993). A study of minority parents of at-risk students indicated that they would get involved only if schools made the effort to initiate effective collaborative partnerships (Elman, 2000). At Minsi Trail School, located in the northeastern part of the United States, 12% of the student population was African American, yet only 3% of the parents attended school gatherings, largely because the school did not reach out to them (McGrath & Kuriloff, 1999). Another study conducted in the Bay area of California supported a need for clear and concise communication, and community outreach. Communication

ranged from fair to poor for extra efforts to reach all families (Hoberecht, 1998).

Communication with parents can assist in alleviating these situations. A Montana school established a family resource center staffed part-time by a social worker to reach out to parents (Fager & Brewster, 1999). The school also began parent-child luncheons, kindergarten outreach, family fun nights, and free adult classes. A Salem, Oregon school began parent field trips where parents could accompany their children on all field trips, thereby giving parents, as well as their students, an educational opportunity (Fager & Brewster, 1999). The Stockton Unified School District in California, which has a population of 35% limited English proficient students, established a parent resource center where other parents and staff alike welcomed parents of the LEP students during school days and on Saturdays (Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 1997). The center served an estimated 5,000 to 7,000 parents during its first five years. An analysis of 42 projects throughout the United States revealed that Hispanic mothers, in particular, tend to become full partners in the education of their children when given the opportunity and encouraged to do so (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). Cambodian, Hispanic, and Vietnamese parents in Tacoma, Washington who participated in school-related activities experienced tangible benefits in the way of enhanced personal knowledge of the educational system (Hodge, 2000). They were

more inclined, however, to participate through support at home rather than attendance at the school. LEP parents in several Arkansas schools stated that they frequently expressed the importance of school to their children but felt the schools needed to conduct more meetings that allowed parents to understand more about the school (Mersky, 1998). Atenville Elementary School in Harts, West Virginia effectively established communication in this coal-mining community through home visits, workshops, and the establishment of a family center. Parents became involved in eleven school committees, volunteer hours increased, and test scores and discipline improved (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1997). In Texas, a network of 32 alliance schools, formed in 1992-1993, expanded to over 100 schools in disadvantaged communities, with the purpose of developing a constituency of parents, community leaders, and educators working together to improve student achievement in low-income communities (Hatch, 1998). One school in Fort Worth formed a group to go door-to-door, church-to-church, and office-to-office to develop support for the school (Hatch, 1998). Home visits have frequently been used to implement parent involvement (Hickman, 1999; Inger, 1992). Such intense efforts clearly demonstrate the power of personal, face-to-face communication.

Benefits of Parent-School Communication

Communication is paramount to receiving support for public schools. For years, teachers have felt that the lack of parental support has been the biggest problem in the public schools (Langdon, 1999). Major reform of public schools will not occur unless parents are made an integral part of the educational system (Calcote, 2000; Vondra, 1996). A review of over thirty years of research supports this premise (Amundson, 1999).

When families are involved in their children's education, children earn higher grades and receive higher scores on tests, attend school more regularly, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes and behaviors, graduate from high school at a higher rate, and are more likely to enroll in higher education than students with less involved families. For these reasons, increasing family involvement in the education of their children is an important goal for schools, particularly those serving low-income and other students at risk of failure. (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1997)

The parents of elementary and middle school students support their children's educational experience more than the parents of high school students (Adkisson, 1998; Barton & Coley, 1992; Jennings, 1999). These parents are also more likely to belong to a parent-teacher organization, improving the quality of the school (West, Rasinski, & Camb, 1990). Multivariate analyses of demographic and program differences from a family involvement questionnaire administered in Pennsylvania revealed

that parents with education beyond high school were engaged in higher levels of school-based involvement than parents with less than high school education, illustrating that the attitude of parents toward education is a factor (Fantuzzo & Tighe, 2000).

The debate over school quality indicates that parent attitudes play a large role in determining the perceived quality of the school (Goldberg, 1999). Only 16% of the respondents to a Phi Delta Kappan poll conducted in Illinois stated they would give their schools a grade of A, which was still higher than the national average of 10% (Jennings, 1999). A study conducted in New York examined the relationship between beliefs and practices of parents and their visibility in the schools. Using a MANOVA to compare differences between two schools, the findings statistically supported that parents view communication with the school as only somewhat important and school-related activities, such as attending PTA meetings, as relatively unimportant (Grossman, 1998). However, results from various researchers continue to demonstrate that parents' attendance at school events such as athletic performances, school plays, and musicals not only affect parents' perceptions of schools, but increase student achievement as well (Finn, 1998; Hickman, 1999). This observation is especially true in high schools (Hickman, 1999). In some cases, parent involvement is a direct result of how schools have previously responded to parent requests. In one school, special requests from wealthy white parents

who pressured the administration to separate their children from poorer African American children resulted in a public relations problem (McGrath & Kuriloff, 1999). The results of a multi-level analysis of 122 public elementary schools revealed an interesting relationship between parent perception of the schools and parent involvement; schools whose parents and students rated them low academically and high on school safety had higher parent involvement, indicating paradoxically, the crucial role that perception of quality plays (Griffith, 1998).

Parent participation improves school quality, especially when parents are volunteers. During the 1995-1996 school year, over 90% of all elementary schools provided parents opportunities to volunteer among other means of participation (NCES, 1998). Using a chi-square to determine if differences existed in the rates of volunteerism in categorical variables, one researcher learned that 44% of elementary parents and 20% of middle school parents volunteered, but only 9% of the high school parents volunteered in their children's schools (Adkisson, 1998). A study about perceptions of parents and teachers toward parental involvement in schools was done with parents of suburban teenagers and their teachers. An ANOVA was used to analyze their perceptions as revealed in two questionnaires devised in consultation with noted researcher, Dr. Joyce Epstein. The results revealed that administrators' and teachers' perceptions of the necessity of parent involvement were much higher than

the perceptions of parents and guardians (Atha, 1998). Volunteers in private schools were almost three times greater than in public schools in 1985, and volunteers were greater in number in the western part of the United States than in the south (Michael, 1990).

If educators in public schools take the first step by asking parents to do something simple, parents tend to take a bigger role in volunteering or governance (Lynn, 1997). In a Chicago forum, parents indicated they would become more involved, including volunteering in the classroom, if their schools were more “parent-friendly” (Jennings, 1999). Some schools have lost parent volunteers because parents did not know how to volunteer effectively. Such restraints have brought about training programs established by principals and superintendents (McGrath & Kuriloff, 1999). In some cases, schools have seen better participation from older citizens who volunteer in classrooms. One such project in North Carolina, the Agelink Project, provides after school services for children (Lipson, 1994). Lipson also espouses a program in Salt Lake City, Utah which recruits and places older citizens to help with activities such as story reading, thereby providing intergenerational support for schools. At a Dallas, Texas elementary school, a group of senior citizens calling themselves “Off Our Rockers” tutored first graders in reading (Michael, 1990). The results of a study in the Los Angeles Unified School District in California provided credence to the theory that parent volunteers make

good teachers as well (Perez, 2000). When the art budget for the district was cut, parents decisively formed an art cadre and supported the teachers in the instruction of art in the regular classroom.

Many opportunities are available for all parents to become active members of school decision-making groups (Liontos, 1992). One statistical report stated that one-quarter to one-third of all schools included parents to a moderate extent in most decision-making, with up to 31% of the schools taking their advice (NCES, 1998). Additionally, parents who participate in school-related activities have found tangible benefits. When parents interact with teachers on planning and management teams, barriers between them are reduced (Peterson, 1989).

Occasionally, parent participation has become indispensable to the success of the school (Donovan, 2000). Parents of a majority Hispanic school became involved in Title I program planning and evaluation, thereby providing leadership in school management decisions (Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 1997). In one urban high school of mostly Black and Hispanic students, parents were actively engaged in gaining reaccreditation for the school, demonstrating the success of parental involvement programs (Colley, 2000). In Wisconsin, a group of parents from affluent suburbs, worried about the pressures that a high stakes state-level test would place on children, influenced the state

legislature to scrap the test before any students took it (Sykes, 1999). Once they are persuaded to participate, stakeholders in education at the community level respond enthusiastically to the opportunity to discuss the future of the public schools (Rose & Rapp, 1997).

There is a clear need for educators to initiate the establishment of communication between school and parents in order to build trusting relationships (Dauber & Epstein, 1989; Liontos, 1992; Rioux & Berla, 1993). In one Iowa school district, a new math curriculum caused consternation from parents. Parent letters, meetings, telephone calls, and surveys helped to eliminate misinformation and build trust among the parents (Meyer, Delegardelle, & Middleton, 1996). A study conducted in a Pennsylvania school determined that parent involvement was crucial in the total success of the school (Donovan, 2000). A multi-site, comparative case study of three Connecticut schools revealed that the older or more advanced students had fewer family involvements, thus stressing the importance of school-initiated partnership efforts (Demikat, 1999). Similarly, a national longitudinal study revealed fewer parents reported contacts from the school about twelfth graders than eighth graders (Catsambis & Garland, 1997). However, 8 in 10 parents of eighth grade students said they talked to their children regularly about their current school experiences (Education Testing Service [ETS], 1999). The data from a Texas study, using a multiple linear regression, revealed that

school personnel, under the leadership of the principal, must communicate successfully with parents in a variety of ways (Thurman, 1999).

Principals, teachers, and community members who have a positive attitude toward parent involvement often launch parent involvement programs without school board influence because school board influence is minimal (Devlin-Scherer & Devlin-Scherer, 1994). An Illinois superintendent compared good parent contacts to an effective partnership in the business world, citing that parents' skills, expertise, perspective, resources and support help to achieve mutual goals of parents and school personnel (DuFour, 2000). Contact is necessary to build trusting relationships, especially when working with a relationship as critical as that between the child's parents and educators, both of whom shape the child's future.

Parent Rights and Responsibilities in American Public Schools

Brandt (1998) cites seven recommendations from the Education Commission of the States of how to involve parents in the education of their children. The federally funded Even Start program has the major goal of helping parents become full partners in the education of their children (Stief, 1993). While parent involvement has been discussed mostly on the federal level, several state and local districts have already established plans. For example, an Oregon middle school offers a five-class program for parents of at-risk children, and a Georgia school district

uses signed contracts to underscore the importance of parent involvement (Peterson, 1989). Parent education is an important part of some schools in New York City which educate parents about the use of standardized tests (Hoerr, 2000). Parents often have difficulty in interpreting percentiles and stanines, so offering explanations is of vital importance. A parent education program in the state of Washington resulted in 98% participation in parent-teacher conferences (Stief, 1993). A side benefit of this program was improved student grades.

According to the Parents Rights and Responsibilities Act of the Texas Education Code (1995), parents have the right to make decisions over a child's academic choices, to access all of the child's written records, to review teaching materials and textbooks, and to obtain information pertaining to the child's school activities. Many parents, however, are unaware of their rights because they depend on the teacher to convey such information to them, but many teachers are unaware of their influence (Kernan-Schloss & Platner, 1998). Greater understanding is needed in cases where parents wish to participate more in their child's education but encounter obstacles when trying to do so (Parent Involvement in Education, 1990). The results of a study of 27 north Texas campus improvement plans revealed that most schools still operate from a traditional model of the family and school as separate spheres of influence

(Holland, 1999). Minimal information was built into these plans to communicate with parents. Available data suggest that successful parent education programs are voluntary, intensive, accessible, and comprehensive among many other components (Stief, 1993).

The primary purpose of schooling is to prepare students to assume their responsibilities as members of a social and political democracy (Clark & Wasley, 1999). Parents must set an example by living up to their responsibilities as well (Stief, 1993). The focus of public education is shifting from having expectations just for students to expectations of all who influence children and youth--parents, surrogate parents, nannies, and even neighborhoods; however, parents control factors such as student absenteeism, excessive television watching and the variety of reading materials in the home (Levin, 1995). Such control has become more difficult in the latter part of the twentieth century. In 1950, only 28.3% of married women with children ages 6 to 17 were in the work force; by 1990, that figure had grown to 73.6% (ETS, 1990).

Additionally, demographic data has had an impact on the family and hence the school. Family patterns, immigration trends, and divorce rates have resulted in changes in the traditional American family. In 1993-1994, nearly one-third of public school students were from racial or ethnic minority groups (Center on Education Policy, 1998). Only 7% of today's school-age children come from families that were typical in 1965--two-

parent, single-wage earner families (Rioux & Berla, 1993). Yet, students with two parents in the home score higher on achievement tests than those with one parent (ETS, 1992). Two parent families also are involved more in school conferences and have more home-based involvement with their children (Fantuzzo & Tighe, 2000). While parents feel their main job is to raise well-behaved children who want to learn, over 1200 parents of children currently in public schools said they feel somewhat beleaguered in having the time to reinforce their children's education (Farkas, Johnson, Daffett, Aulicino, & McHugh, 1999).

Families who struggle financially often are less involved and have different views of their need of involvement. Families with incomes of less than \$44,000 annually have a significantly lower degree of perception toward necessary parent involvement than families whose income exceeds \$60,000 annually (Atha, 1998). Upper class families are typically engaged in school activities and influential in school decisions, while working class parents take on a more supportive role with respect to their involvement with a child's school (Olmscheid, 1999). Ironically, family participation in education is twice as predictive of students' academic learning as family socioeconomic status (Fantuzzo & Tighe, 2000; Rioux & Berla, 1993). Regardless of the parents' educational level, parents have an obligation to support their children's education from elementary school through college (Otterbourg, 1996).

In analyzing the status of parent participation in the education of their youngsters from the time that publicly supported universal education was first established to its current status, two factors have remained constant. Parent involvement plays a vital part in the survival of the American public school, and school personnel must take the initiative in gaining parent support. Ultimately, the future of the country is at stake.

PROCEDURES

The general public has begun to lose faith in the American public school, and because the public school is representative of the democratic system by providing free education to all children, a system must be established to improve the image and the mission of the public school. The researchers consistently conclude that parents are the one factor that can provide cohesion between the general public's view and the actual tasks of school personnel in providing an excellent education for all students (Calcote, 2000; Office of Educational Improvement, 1997; Rose & Rapp, 1997).

Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District in Carrollton, Texas faces the same problems as other districts across the nation in attaining parental involvement in the classrooms and on the campuses. The situation is complicated by having many immigrant

children whose parents have recently moved them to this country and come with a different set of attitudes toward becoming involved in the school and related activities.

Another purpose of this paper was to develop a guide to help all parents become more communicative with schools. A software PowerPoint presentation was also developed to assist administrators and teachers to communicate more effectively with parents. The guide incorporated suggestions for providing support to teachers and administrators, including vital information about school programs and procedures. The PowerPoint presentation provided tips for reaching out to parents. In effect, these products helped to facilitate the communication between personnel in the school and parents in the home. Some of the guide was translated into Spanish to assist the large number of Spanish-speaking parents in the community.

The guide was a compilation of general information about how and whom to contact at each school in the Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD. A list of key administrators for each building, along with their office phone numbers and e-mail addresses, was included. The guide explained under what circumstances parents should contact the appropriate person and how they might expect to receive correspondence in return.

The guide included information about all standardized testing conducted during the school year. Additionally, suggestions were given as to how the parents could assist the school in preparing their child to be successful on these tests. The efforts of school personnel were included as well. A school calendar for the 2000-2001 school year with dates of all standardized testing was part of this section. Reference to the laws mandating state testing was included as well. The guide listed various opportunities for parent involvement in the life of the school. Since these opportunities may vary from school to school, the PTA president from each building was listed as the parent-school liaison. This person was someone familiar with all school organizations, for both parents and students, as well as opportunities for parent volunteers.

The PowerPoint presentation was a production that can be viewed in approximately ten minutes, addressed principals, and gave information about parent concerns as discovered in the related literature. The PowerPoint presentation was added to the series of staff development opportunities available on the district intranet system. The guide developed for parents and community was also referenced.

It is hoped that both the guide and the PowerPoint presentation would assist in providing more personal contact between parents and school personnel. Both aimed to provide more support for each individual

school in the district, ultimately affecting the education of each individual child (See Appendices).

CONCLUSIONS

Research over the course of the past several decades has consistently shown what is obvious to the majority of the educated public-- parental involvement in a child's life extends past the home environment and into the school. While teachers, administrators, and their schools are constantly being bombarded with demands for excellence, little attention has been paid to the role of parents to achieve high levels of learning with their children. As their child's first teachers and role models, parents must, in spite of time or monetary constraints, assume that role throughout the child's formal education (Desimone, 1999).

A vital part of modeling is placing high value on learning. It is unthinkable that parents should verbalize that value without practicing it as well; therefore, parents must become knowledgeable about and involved in current educational practices. Likewise, school personnel must become the catalyst in delivering that knowledge with the expectation that parents will respond reciprocally (Brandt, 1999).

The first step toward accomplishing such communication must come from the school. Schools can publish information in a variety of

ways, from material given to the child to take home to messages sent through cable television stations. However, one-on-one, face-to-face communication may produce the greatest results.

Conclusions determined from an examination of comprehensive research point to several methods for increasing parental involvement in the schools. School employees must find areas where parents can be directly involved, uniting them in a common cause such as improving school safety, tutoring below level readers, or chaperoning events and field trips. Parental involvement of this type reassures parents that their children are receiving the quality education that all want for their offspring.

The school's staff must provide a place on the campus where parents feel comfortable, such as parent centers or volunteer rooms. Having someone who speaks their language may be necessary in multi-ethnic communities.

School personnel or parent support groups must provide a means of parent education through regularly scheduled events held on the campus and in the community where parents live. Apartments often have community rooms where awareness sessions can be held. Schools can provide buses to transport parents to the campuses for open house or other meetings, if necessary.

Every member of the school's staff must help to educate parents as to the necessity of staying involved with their child's school through high

school graduation. Such involvement includes support at home as well as attendance at school activities. Involvement from many interested parties gives credence to the philosophy of “it takes a whole village to raise a child.” A child most frequently needs such support in the later years of his or her schooling, and ironically, parents tend to show less support of the schools when their children reach the upper grades.

As society continues to change, so must the public school in its efforts to seek the support it needs to survive. As repeatedly pointed out in the research, the very life of American democracy hangs in the balance. Above all else, the future of the citizenry rests in the hands of educators and parents, and they must unite to maintain the strength of the nation. A visionary fellow once created an educational poster which boasted, “When parents and teachers collaborate on behalf of children, they create windows of light for the generations that follow.”

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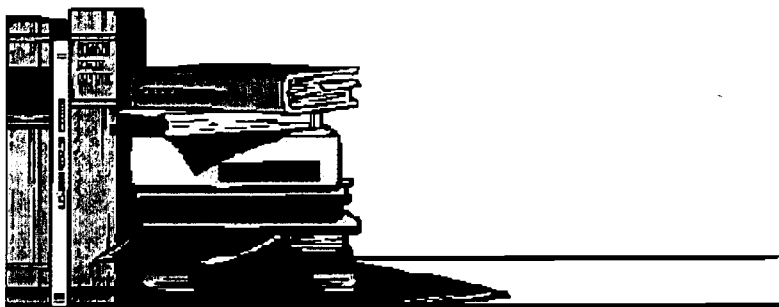
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APPENDICES

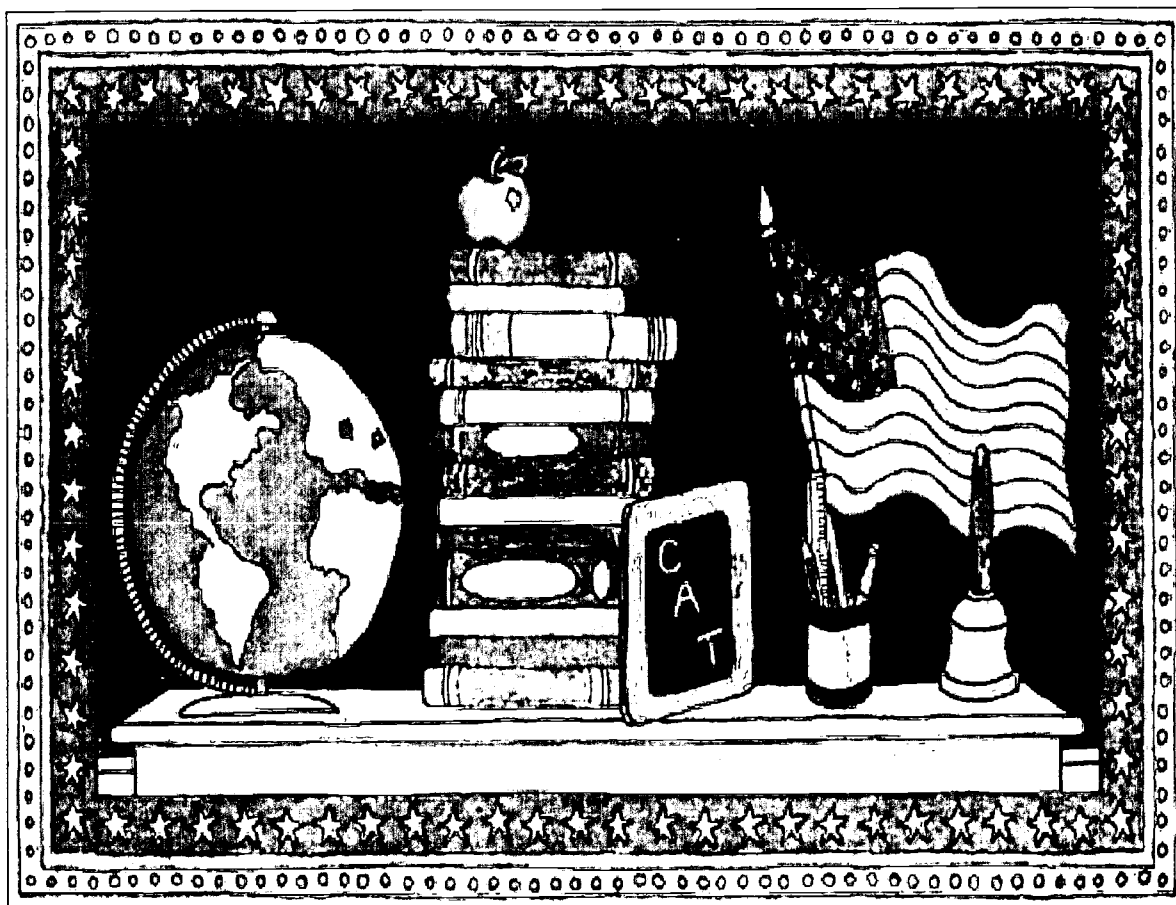
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Appendix A

A Guidebook For Parents of Children In the Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District



A Guide for Parents

Of Children in the

Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent

School District

Fall, 2000



Carrollton · Farmers Branch

Independent School District

Dear Parent,

Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District is pleased to provide you with a guidebook of information to assist you in becoming a vital participant in the education of your child. Parents are the child's first teachers, and when the child begins his or her formal education in our district, we want to ensure that we become partners with you in his or her education.

Please review the information in this guidebook. After reading through the information, please address any questions you may have to the principal of the school which your child attends. Our principals are highly motivated to establish a good working relationship with each parent of each child. You may also wish to contact the president of your school's Parent Teacher Association to learn more about the activities of that organization and how you can become an active member of PTA.

You are encouraged to communicate regularly with school personnel, attend parent conferences, and seek information about your child and his or her school throughout the school year. Teachers and administrators will regularly provide you with progress reports, dates for parent-teacher conferences, and notices of other meetings. Every campus has someone who speaks Spanish and can be of assistance to you.

Together we can build a better future for our students and our nation. Together we can establish valuable learning experiences for every child.

Administrators, Teachers and Staff of Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD



Carrollton · Farmers Branch

Independent School District

Queridos Padres,

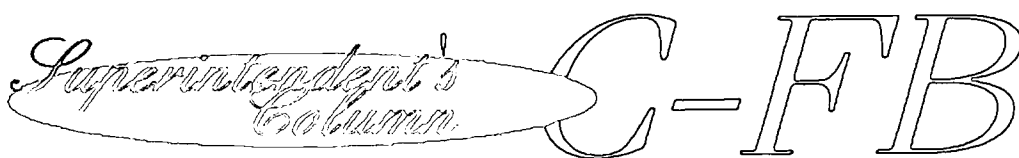
El Distrito Escolar Independiente de Carrollton-Farmers Branch tiene el placer de proveerles un libro-guia que les asistira en como convertirse en un vital participante en la educacion de sus hijos. Los padres de familia son los primeros maestros de sus hijos, y cuando sus hijos empiecen una educacion formal con nuestro distrito, queremos asegurarles que juntos seremos companeros en la educacion de su hijo o hija.

Por favor repase la informacion que se encuentra en el libro-guia. Despues de leer la informacion, por favor de comunicarse con el director de la escuela que su hijo o hija asista, si tiene algunas preguntas. Nuestros directores estan muy motivados en establacer una relacion de trabajo con los padres de cada alumno. Tambien, Ud. quizas desee comunicarse con el presidente de la Asociacion de Padres y Maestros (que se llama PTA en ingles) para informarse acerca de las actividades de esa organizacion y de como convertirse en miembro del PTA.

Le animamos a comunicarse con el personal de su escuela a menudo , a que atiendan conferencias y a que soliciten informacion acerca de su hijo o hija y de su escuela atreves del ano escolar. Los maestros y el centro de administracion les proveeran con reportes de progreso, fechas de conferencias para los padres y maestros, y notificacion acerca de otras juntas. Todas las escuelas tienen a personas que le asistiran en espanol.

Juntos podremos construir un futuro mejor para nuestros estudiantes y nuestra nacion. Juntos podremos establecer grandes experiencias de aprendizaje para nuestros hijos.

Administradores, Maestros, y Personal del distrito escolar Carrollton-Farmers Branch.



Carrollton Farmers Branch Independent School District

Annette T. Griffin, Ed.D.

We in the Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District believe that when educators and parents work together, children benefit. Parents are the biggest influence in the lives of their children. As a school district, we encourage parents to be active participants in their children's education.

For a number of years, the district has designated two parent-teacher conference days during the school year – one after the end of the first six weeks and one after the end of the fourth sixth weeks. Our first designated parent-teacher conference day is Tuesday, October 10. Because our teachers and principals want to accommodate the schedules of parents, most C-FB ISD schools have rescheduled conferences before and after school and on Saturdays. Parents will receive information from their individual schools regarding the scheduling of conferences. I encourage any parent who does not receive information about scheduling a parent-teacher conference to contact your child's school or teachers.

Although these conferences bring anticipation to many parents, others may be anxious about returning to school to interact with their children's teachers. Overwhelming as they may seem, parent-teacher conferences are great opportunities for parents to learn more about their children and their children's teachers. We believe the conference provides a great opportunity for parents to help children succeed in school. When parents and our school staff work together, we are helping students have a successful school year.

Here are some tips to help parents prepare for the conference.

Before the conference, parents may want to ask their children what they think their best subjects are and what they like best about school. Ask them, if there are any items they would like you to talk about with their teachers. Some students may worry about the meeting between their parents and teachers, but assure them that a conference is designed to help you and their teachers provide a better learning environment. In addition, you may want to be prepared to discuss the following with your child's teachers:

- Your child's life at home, personality, problems, habits, and hobbies you believe are important for the teacher to know.
- How you and the school can work together to help your child.
- Programs and class work on which you need more information.

During the conference, you may want to ask questions to get a clearer picture of your children's progress.

- Does my child participate in class discussions and activities?
- Have you noticed any changes in the way my child behaves in class?
- Is my child working to his/her ability?
- What subjects does my child seem to enjoy the most? What are the least favorite?

Prior to the conference, teachers will review samples of your children's work and will develop ideas to help students do even better in school. During the conference, the teacher will share information with you about what has occurred so far this school year but will also discuss future projects and timelines. You and your child's teacher may want to develop an action plan to ensure that this school year is successful for your child.

After the conference, parents are encouraged to discuss with their children any action plans that have been made. Let your children know that you and their teachers care about them and that you are working together to make this school year the best one ever. Although the district sets aside special times for parent-teacher conferences, we want parents to stay in regular contact with their children's teachers. When parents and teachers work together, we build strong home-school partnerships. These partnerships help us meet a common goal – helping children obtain the best education possible.



2000-2001 Official (Revised) Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD School Calendar (Revised 2/10/00)

August 2000

- 3 - Convocation/Staff Development/Student Holiday
- 4 - Staff Development/Student Holiday
- 7 - Staff Development/Student Holiday
- 8 - Teacher Preparation/Student Holiday
- 9 - First Day of School/First Six Weeks Begins
- 16 - First Day for Prekindergarten Classes

September 2000

- 4 - Labor Day/District Holiday

October 2000

- 9 - Fair Day/Student Holiday
- 10 - Parent/Teacher Conference Day (Schools may develop an alternate schedule for parent conferences.)
- 24 - TAAS Exit-Level Writing
- 25 - TAAS Exit-Level Mathematics
- 26 - TAAS Exit-Level Reading

November 2000

- 20, 21 - School Holidays
- 22, 23, 24 - District Holidays (Thanksgiving)

December 2000

- 15, 18, 19 - High School Exam Early Release Days
- 18, 19 - Middle School Exam Early Release Days
- 18, 19 - Elementary School Early Dismissal, 1:10 p.m.
- 19 - End of First Semester
- 20 - Teacher Preparation/Student Holiday, 12 noon dismissal
- 21-Jan. 1 - School Winter Break/District Holidays

January 2001

- 1 - District Holiday
- 2 - Staff Development Day/Student Holiday
- 3 - Second Semester Begins
- 3 - Fourth Six Weeks Begins
- 15 - District Holiday - MLK Birthday Observed

February 2001

- 20 - TAAS Writing - grades 4, 8, Exit-Level
- 21 - TAAS Exit-Level Mathematics
- 22 - TAAS Exit-Level Reading
- 23 - School Holiday

March 2001

- 5-9 - Texas Public Schools Week
- 9 - Parent/Teacher Conference Day/Student HolidayDay (Schools may develop an alternate schedule for parent conferences.)
- 12-16 - Spring Break/District Holiday

April 2001

- 12, 16 - Bad Weather Days (first day used April 12)
- 13 - District Holiday
- 24 - TAAS Mathematics, grades 3-8
- 25 - TAAS Reading, grades 3-8
- 26 - TAAS grade 8 Social Studies
- 27 - TAAS, grade 8 Science

May 2001

- 1 - TAAS Exit-Level Writing
- 2 - TAAS Exit-Level Mathematics
- 3 - TAAS Exit-Level Reading
- 22, 23, 24 - High School Exam Early Release Days
- 23, 24 - Middle School Exam Early Release Days
- 23, 24 - Elementary School Early Dismissal, 1:10 p.m.
- 24 - Last class day for students
- 25 - Teacher Preparation Day/Student Holiday
- 27 - Graduation
- 28 - District Holiday/Memorial Day



Directory of Schools

C-FB ISD provides instructional services to children who live in portions of:
Addison, Carrollton, Coppell, Farmers Branch, Irving and Dallas.
 C-FB ISD prides itself on making the schools, principals and teachers accessible to its communities.

Listed are the district's schools addresses, phone numbers and principals
 for the 2000-2001 school year.

ELEMENTARY DIRECTORY

Blanton Elementary

Principal: Patty Fair
 2525 Scott Mill Road
 Carrollton, TX 75006
 Phone: 972-323-6600
 Fax: 972-323-6449

Carrollton Elementary

Principal: Janie Vega
 1805 Pearl Street
 Carrollton, TX 75006
 Phone: 972-323-6603
 Fax: 972-323-6500

Central Primary

Principal: Adriana Gomez
 1600 South Perry Road
 Carrollton, TX 75006
 Phone: 972-323-5925
 Fax: 972-323-6501

Central Intermediate

Principal: Pat Herndon
 1800 Cox Street
 Carrollton, TX 75006
 Phone: 972-323-6548
 Fax: 972-323-5865

Country Place Elementary

Principal: Carolyn Henson
 2115 Raintree
 Carrollton, TX 75006
 Phone: 972-323-6607
 Fax: 972-323-6476

Davis Elementary

Principal: Lisa Williams
 3805 Dorchester
 Carrollton, TX 75007
 Phone: 972-323-6915
 Fax: 972-323-6688

Farmers Branch Elementary

Principal: Marelou Cisneros
 13521 Tom Field Road
 Farmers Branch, TX 75234
 Phone: 972-323-6130
 Fax: 972-241-3475

Furneaux Elementary

Principal: Jim Cunningham
 3210 Furneaux Road
 Carrollton, TX 75007
 Phone: 972-323-5950
 Fax: 972-323-6504

Good Elementary

Principal: Leslie Coney
 1012 Study Lane
 Carrollton, TX 75006
 Phone: 972-323-6932
 Fax: 972-323-5889

Kent Elementary

Principal: Linda Hawkins
 1800 Rosemeade Parkway West
 Carrollton, TX 75007
 Phone: 972-323-6464
 Fax: 972-323-6455

Tom Landry Elementary

Principal: Benita Gordon
 265 Red River Trail
 Irving, TX 75063
 Phone: 972-869-1551
 Fax: 972-869-1816

Las Colinas Elementary

Principal: Debbie Merki
 2200 Kinwest Parkway
 Irving, TX 75063
 Phone: 972-869-3996
 Fax: 972-869-4077

McCoy Elementary

Principal: Tracy Smith
 2425 McCoy Road
 Carrollton, TX 75006
 Phone: 972-323-6244
 Fax: 972-323-6506

McKamy Elementary

Principal: Joan Burk
 3443 Briargrove Lane
 Dallas, TX 75287
 Phone: 972-323-6520
 Fax: 972-323-6524

McLaughlin Elementary

Principal: Coby Cathey
 1500 Webb Chapel
 Carrollton, TX 75006
 Phone: 972-389-1050
 Fax: 972-323-6507

Montgomery Elementary

Principal: Brent Hoy
 2807 Amber Lane
 Farmers Branch, TX 75234
 Phone: 972-323-8160
 Fax: 972-406-3942

Rainwater Elementary

Principal: Cathy Bratton
 1408 East Frankford Road
 Carrollton, TX 75007
 Phone: 972-323-6550
 Fax: 972-323-6554

Riverchase Elementary

Principal: Holly Barber
 272 S. MacArthur Blvd.
 Coppell, TX 75019
 Phone: 972-323-6200
 Fax: 972-323-6227

Rosemeade Elementary

Principal: Larry Conner
 3550 Kimberly at Raleigh
 Carrollton, TX 75007
 Phone: 972-395-7900
 Fax: 972-395-7927

Sheffield Primary

Principal: Nicole Farrar
 18111 Kelly Boulevard
 Dallas, TX 75287
 Phone: 972-323-6621
 Fax: 972-323-6685

Sheffield Intermediate

Principal: Terry Carpenter
 18111 Kelly Boulevard
 Dallas, TX 75287
 Phone: 972-323-6470
 Fax: 972-323-6508

Janie Stark Elementary

Principal: Jan Ramirez
 12400 Josey Lane
 Farmers Branch, TX 75234
 Phone: 972-247-7153
 Fax: 972-247-4908

Thompson Elementary

Principal: Abby McCone
 2915 Scott Mill Road
 Carrollton, TX 75007
 Phone: 972-323-6618
 Fax: 972-323-6510

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Blalack Middle School

Principal: Edward Chevallier
 1706 Peters Colony
 Carrollton, TX 75007
 Phone: 972-394-3140
 Fax: 972-323-6488

Barbara Bush Middle School

Principal: Barry Dodson
 515 Cowboys Parkway
 Irving, TX 75063
 Phone: 972-868-3000
 Fax: 972-868-3022

Dan F. Long Middle School

Principal: Theresa Hall
 2525 Frankford Road
 Dallas, TX 75287
 Phone: 972-662-4100
 Fax: 972-323-6540

DeWitt Perry Middle School

Principal: Cyndi Boyd
 1709 Belt Line Road
 Carrollton, TX 75006
 Phone: 972-323-3670
 Fax: 972-323-6635

Ted Polk Middle School

Principal: David Hicks
 2001 Kelly Boulevard
 Carrollton, TX 75006
 Phone: 972-417-8090
 Fax: 972-417-8089

Vivian Field Middle School

Principal: Kelly Calvery
 13551 Dennis Road
 Farmers Branch, TX 75234
 Phone: 972-969-9500
 Fax: 972-243-2275

HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Creekview High School

Principal: Shelia Maher
3201 Old Denton Road
Carrollton, TX 75006
Phone: 972-939-4000
Fax: 972-939-4009

Newman Smith High School

Principal: Lee Alvord
2335 North Josey Lane
Carrollton, TX 75006
Phone: 972-389-3800
Fax: 972-323-5886

R.L. Turner High School

Principal: Kim Holland
1600 Josey Lane
Carrollton, TX 75006
Phone: 972-389-3850
Fax: 972-323-5980

CENTER DIRECTORY

Bea Salazar Transition School

Administrator: Karen DeWitt
2416 Keller Springs Road
Carrollton, TX 75006
GED in school program
AEP Program
Career Placement Center

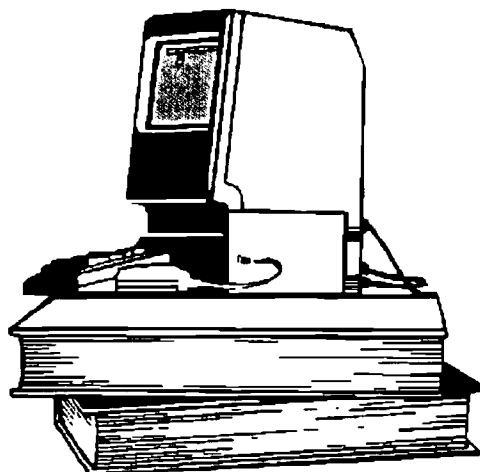
Phone: 972-323-6557
Fax: 972-323-6559

Marie Huie Special Education Center

Director: Margaret Gunther
2115 Frankford Road
Carrollton, TX 75007
972-323-5755
Fax: 972-323-6559

Mary Grimes Education Center

Principal: Wade Lillie
1745 Hutton Drive
Carrollton, TX 75006-6617
Phone: 972-323-6275
Fax: 972-323-6453



Web Site Information and E-Mail Addresses for Employees

Information about the Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District can be found on the district's web site at <http://www.cfbisd.edu>. Much of the information is also available in Spanish.

The items of information on the web site include:

- A listing of all schools and their home web pages.
- Web pages for each department of the school district's administration offices.
- Information for parents regarding bus routes, school calendar, and summer school.
- An area map including an outline of school feeder systems.
- Human resource information listing all current job openings and an on-line application form.
- Current events in the district.
- Schedules for athletic and other events.
- Links to the city offices of the five cities which make up the school district.
- Link to the Texas Education Agency which gives access to school laws, the state accountability system, and other aspects of state school governance.
- School board information and meeting agendas.
- Copies of Superintendent Annette Griffin's newspaper columns.

School principals may be contacted by e-mail by using the last name and first initial of the principal at the district web site address. Janie Vega, for example, can be reached at the address vegaj@cfbisd.edu. To find a principal's complete name, look at the listing elsewhere in this pamphlet or check the home web page of your child's school.

Teachers can also be accessed using the same method, last name followed by the first initial and the web site address.

The Texas Education Code Concerning Parent Involvement

The Texas Education Code revised by the 74th Texas State Legislature states that “parents will be full partners with educators in the education of their children.” This means that schools have obligations to collaborate with parents and parents have obligations to assist the schools in their child’s educational development.

Schools are to involve parents by:

- Offering training in school restructuring in order to improve student achievement.
- Ensuring that parents are part of the district and campus-level planning and decision-making committees as well as to be asked for input into the process.
- Providing parent representation on the local health education advisory council to ensure that local values and health issues are reflected in the district’s human sexuality instruction.
- Providing written notice of their student’s performance in each class once every 12 weeks. Schools must also notify parents about eligibility for special education services, bilingual education, and special services for children who are deaf or visually impaired.
- Providing notification when their student has violated the student code of conduct and attend scheduled hearings for removal from a classroom or campus or admitted to a school-community guidance center.
- Providing notification of public hearings about the district and campus accountability reports as well as receiving appropriate information about student performance at the campus level.

Parents have the right to:

- Request a class change for a student.
- Request the addition of a specific academic class if there is sufficient interest.
- Request the child attend a class above the child’s grade level.
- Request that a child who completes all required courses may graduate early and participate in graduation ceremonies.

- Have access to ten different types of student records.
- Review each test administered to the child (after it has been administered.)
- Review all teaching materials and to have full information regarding school activities.
- Attend any meeting of the board of trustees (except an officially closed meeting or executive session, as allowed by law.)
- Disallow certain activities without parental consent, such as tape recording or videotaping a student (except for purposed of safety, extracurricular activities, or regular classroom instruction.)
- Remove a child from a class that conflicts with the family's religious or moral beliefs.



La Participacion de los Padres Segun elCodigo de Educacion del Estado de Texas

El Codigo de Estado de Texas que fue revisado por la Legislatura Estatal Numero 74 dice que “los padres tienen que ser pareja con los educadores de sus ninios.” Esto quiere decir que las escuelas estan obligadas a colaborar con los padres y los padres estan obligados a ayudar a las escuelas con el desarrollo educativo de su nino.

Las escuelas deben de involucrar a los padres en:

- Ayudar en la estructura de las clases del nino para mejorar su desarrollo escolar.
- Asegurar que los padres esten incluidos en las decisiones del distrito escolar y de la escuela individua.
- Asegurar que los padres esten incluidos en los consejos de salud para que los valores de la familia se representen en la instruccion de la sexualidad humana.
- Proveer a los padres cada 12 semanas noticias acerca del desarrollo de su nino. Tambien las escuelas tienen que informar a los padres si el nino califica para programas de educacion especial, educacion bilingue, o servicios particulares para ninios con dificultades de la vision o que son sordos.
- Notificar a los padres si el alumno ha violado el codigo de conducta. Los padres tambien deben de acompanar a su nino a cualquier junta o audiencia que resulta del mal comportamiento del nino.
- Notificar a los padres de todas las asambleas publicas que se tratan del distrito escolar, de los estandares de las escuelas, y del desarrollo de los alumnos individuos.

Los padres tienen el derecho de:

- Pedir un cambio de clase para su nino.
- Pedir una clase especifica si hay suficiente interes.
- Pedir que el nino asista a la clase de un nivel mas alto.
- Pedir que el nino se gradue temprano si cumple con las clases requeridas.
- Tener acceso a diez diferentes tipos de records estudiantiles.
- Examinar cada examen del nino (despues de que tomen el examen).

- Examinar todas las materias del maestro y tener toda la informacion acerca de actividades escolares.
- Asistir a cualquiera junta del Consejo de Administracion (excepto a una junta cerrada por ley).
- No permitir ciertas actividades de la escuela o del distrito escolar sin su permiso. Estas actividades incluyen grabando la voz del alumno y grabandolo con una camara de video (excepto si para la seguridad o para la instruccion normal de la clase).
- Quitar a un nino de una clase que conflictu con sus creencias religiosas o morales.





Information for Volunteers

Parents of students in the Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District are encouraged to become active in the schools where their children attend. Volunteers are always needed and appreciated.

Ways in which parents can volunteer in schools include:

- Assisting in the classroom with students who need additional help.
- Assisting the teacher by preparing materials, duplicating, and making instructional materials and bulletin boards.
- Assisting the school secretary.
- Assisting the librarian.
- Providing classroom enrichment resources such as finding speakers or collecting materials.
- Assisting in the school clinic, especially with screening help.
- Chaperoning field trips, extracurricular activities, assemblies, or parties.
- Assisting in the cafeteria or on the playground.
- Assisting with special day activities, such as when pictures are taken, registration is occurring, or competitions are taking place.
- Recruiting other volunteers for assistance as needed.
- Participating on school district councils, task forces, and other committees.

All persons serving in the capacity of volunteer in the district **must**:

1. Have a completed application on file in the principal's office before volunteering.
2. Clear a criminal record check.
3. Attend a campus volunteer orientation meeting.

Volunteers may begin once the registration form and criminal record consent have been completed. Principals will be contacted if a volunteer's criminal record has not cleared.

The campus principal oversees the work of the volunteer on the campus. Parents interested in volunteering should contact the principal. A list of principals is included in this booklet.

2000-2001 CFBISD Local PTA Presidents

Early Childhood PTAs

Carrollton Early Childhood PTA	Carol Hughes.....323-9715
Farmers Branch Early Childhood PTA	Joy Shepherd.....243-4822

Elementary School PTAs

Blanton Elementary	Monica Hogue.....416-8088
Carrollton Elementary	Teri Keka.....466-1343
Country Place Elementary	Wes Peterson.....418-9484
Davis Elementary	Kathy Ohnemus.....395-0118
	Michelle Brown.....492-2022
Farmers Branch Elementary	Claudia Aranda.....247-2945
Furneaux Elementary	Scott Smith.....939-2167
Good Elementary	Heather Ashwell-Hair.....245-2602
Kent Elementary	Deb Moss.....446-0033
Landry Elementary	Jessie Barbara.....869-4029
Las Colinas Elementary	Shelley Merkel.....869-0764
McCoy Elementary	Kathy Duda.....245-2985
McKamy Elementary	David Fedorko.....307-2353
McLaughlin Elementary	Tamara Cleghorn.....243-7750
Montgomery Elementary	Mark Gregory.....620-9517
Rainwater Elementary	Gretchen Biery.....323-6046
Rosemeade Elementary	Vicky Brandt.....395-1162
Sheffield Elementary	Anthony Hoover.....306-9081
Stark Elementary	Nancy Watter.....241-2675
Thompson Elementary	Colette Ogden.....323-1212

Middle School PTAs

Bush Middle School	Amanda Anderson.....444-8786
Blalack Middle School	Lyn Johnston.....394-9565
Field Middle School	Pam Binford.....241-9230
Long Middle School	Tessa Stearman.....492-5343
Perry Middle School	Sharon Luke.....245-3781
Polk Middle School	Juli Buschman.....416-5465

High School PTAs

Creekview High School	Angela Jacobs.....466-1632
Smith High School	Julie Bailey.....416-2353
Turner High School	Mary Cox.....243-5806

Please contact the PTA president of your child's school for information regarding meetings, programs, and items of interest.

It is to the advantage of you and your child to become an active participant in this organization.

Texas Laws Regarding Testing

The legislature of this state has mandated that statewide testing be conducted. State-mandated testing in Texas is regulated by the Texas Education Code, Chapter 39, which is the Public School System Accountability clause. The State Board of Education and the Texas Education Agency are responsible for seeing that those tests are written and administered in the manner designated by law. According to the law, the tests must be knowledge-based and skills-based to ensure accountability for student achievement that accomplishes the goals established in other sections of the law. Laws regarding when students are tested and what tests they must take have changed recently. The current schedule of tests and designated grades for those tests can be found on the following page.

Parents of students who are classified as LEP (Limited English Proficient) need to be aware that in the spring of 2001, all LEP students in grades 3 through 8 will be required to take the TAAS test regardless of their primary language. They may take the test in either English or Spanish. If the child has been in the United States for less than 12 months, and he or she has not received adequate schooling to be tested in either English or Spanish, he or she may receive a one-time exemption from taking the test.

Beginning in the spring of 2003, the laws regarding testing will change. The new law states that the following tests must be administered:

- Mathematics – all students in grades 3 through 7 will take the test without the aid of technology (calculators) and in grades 8 through 11 with the aid of technology on any test that includes algebra.
- Reading – annually in grades 3 through 9.
- Writing (including grammar and spelling) – in grades four and seven.
- English Language Arts – grade 10.
- Social Studies – grades 8 and 10.
- Science – grades 5 and 10.
- Exit Level tests in Math, English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science – grade 11. These tests must be passed in order for a student to graduate from any Texas public high school.

When the new law takes effect, the end-of-course tests outlined on the following pages will no longer be administered.



Las Leyes del Estado de Texas acerca de la administracion de los Exámenes

La legislatura de este estado ha mandado que se necesita dar exámenes. Estos exámenes son regulados por el Código de Educación del Estado de Texas, el Capítulo 39, que es la Clausula de Responsabilidad de las Escuelas Publicas. La Junta Directiva de la Educación y la Agencia de Educación de Texas son responsables para la forma en que estos exámenes son escritos y dados a los niños. Según la ley, los exámenes tienen que basados en los conocimientos y las destrezas de los niños para que haya responsabilidad general que satisfice la metas establecidas en otras partes de la ley. Las leyes acerca de cuando se presentan los exámenes y cuales exámenes se presentan ha cambiado recientemente. El horario actual de esos exámenes y las notas designadas para esos exámenes se encuentran en la pagina siguiente.

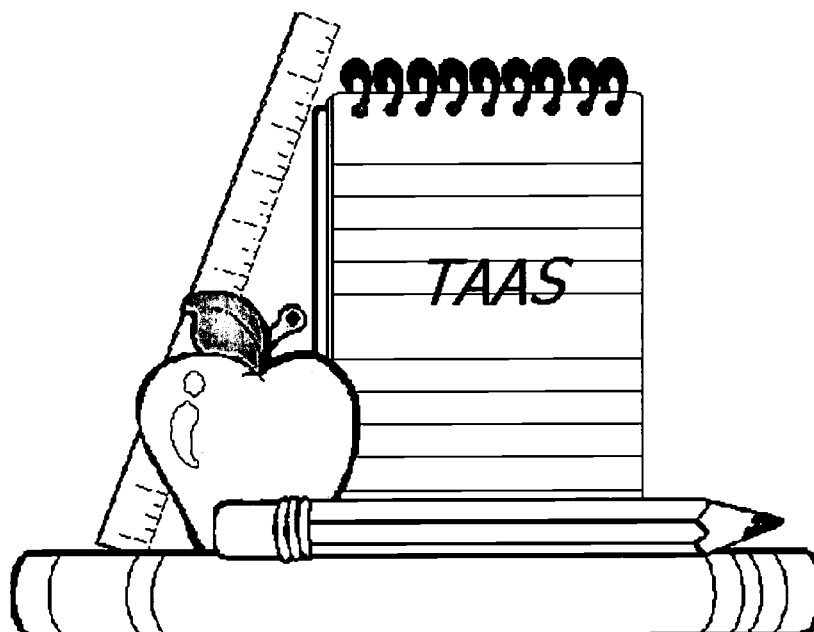
Los padres de los estudiantes quienes estan clasificados como LEP (Competencia Limitada en Ingles) tienen que saber que en la primavera de 2001, todos los estudiantes LEP en los grados de 3 a 8 seran requeridos a tomar el examen TAAS no importa que sea su primer idioma. Ellos pueden presentar el examen en español o en inglés. Si el niño ha vivido en los EEUU por menos de 12 meses, y el/ella no ha recibido la suficiente educación para presentarlo en ninguna de los dos idiomas, el/ella puede recibir una exención una vez solamente.

A partir de la primavera del 2003, las leyes acerca de la presentación de los exámenes cambiarán. La nueva ley manda que hay que tomar los siguientes exámenes:

- Las matemáticas – todos los estudiantes de los grados 3 a 7 tienen que tomar un examen sin asistencia de maquina (calculadora), y los del los grados 8 a 11 con la asistencia de calculadora si el examen incluye algebra.
- La lectura – cada año de los grados 3 a 9.
- El escribir (que incluye la gramática y la ortografía) – los grados 4 a 7.
- Artes del Lenguaje Ingles – el grado 10.
- Estudios Sociales – los grados 8 a 10.
- Las Ciencias – los grados 5 y 10.
- Exámenes de Realización de las Matemáticas, Artes del Lenguaje Ingles, Estudios Sociales, y las Ciencias – el grado 11. Todos los estudiantes tienen que presentarlos y pasarlos antes de graduarse de cualquiera escuela secundaria en el estado de Texas.

Cuando se lleven a cabo estas nuevas leyes, los exámenes elaborados en las siguientes paginas ya no se vayan a presentar.





***TAAS Testing Dates
2000-2001 School Year***

February 20, 2001: Writing - Grades 4, 8, and 10(Exit-Level)

February 21, 2001: Math – Grade 10(Exit-Level)

February 22, 2001: Reading – Grade 10(Exit-Level)

April 24, 2001: Math – Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

April 25, 2001: Reading – Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

April 26, 2001: Social Studies – Grade 8

April 27, 2001: Science – Grade 8

High school students who have missed past TAAS testing dates, or who have not passed the test the previous year, may take the exit-level tests on the following dates:

October 24, 2000: Writing

October 25, 2000: Math

October 26, 2000: Reading

May 1, 2001: Writing

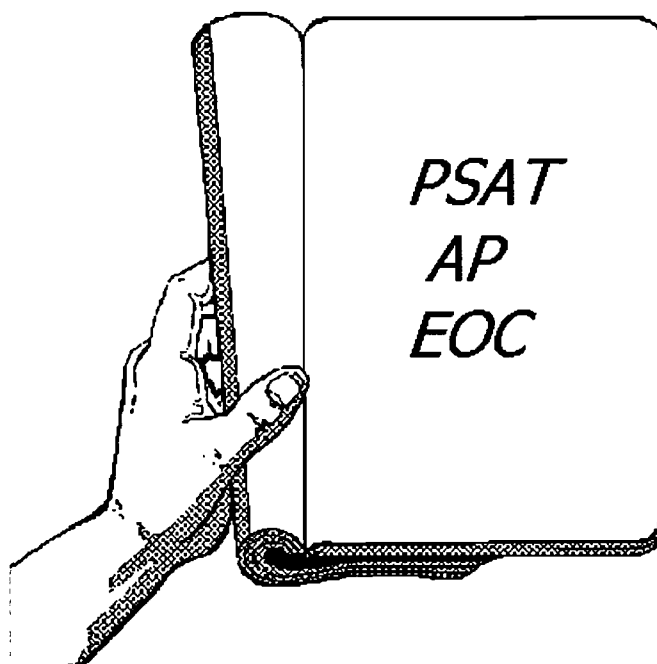
May 2, 2001: Math

May 3, 2001: Reading

July 10, 2001: Writing

July 11, 2001: Math

July 12, 2001: Reading



PSAT, Advanced Placement, and End-of-Course Testing Dates

October 17, 2000: PSAT administered to students in grades 10 and 11. It is compulsory and students take the test at district expense. An exception is made for any student who is exempt from TAAS. That student is also exempt from taking the PSAT.

May 7 – 18, 2001: Advanced Placement tests given to students taking advanced placement courses.

May 21-24, 2001: End-of-course tests given in English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History.

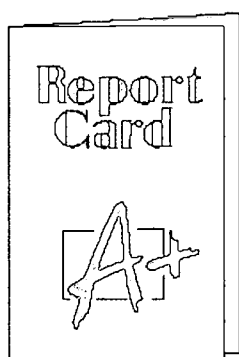
Preparing Your Child for Testing

Testing can be a time of anxiety for many children. Parents can be of great assistance in reducing anxiety and developing confidence in their children. Whether students are taking standardized tests or teacher-made classroom tests, parents can help to prepare the child.

Tips:

- **Make sure that your child has adequate rest before taking a test. Children who are not well rested find it more difficult to concentrate.**
- **Prepare a good breakfast for your child. This should become a daily habit, but it is especially important on test day. The brain needs fuel to function much like a car needs fuel to run.**
- **Discussing the test with your child beforehand helps him or her to understand its importance. Ask the child to do his or her best. Doing so will ensure that you are supportive of his or her efforts.**
- **Ask the school to provide access to water during the test. Water hydrates the brain and encourages productive thought.**
- **Assist your child with his or her studies. Parents can learn much about their child's capabilities by simply listening to him or her read. By regularly reviewing information with your child or questioning him or her about assigned studies, the child learns that parents value his or her efforts.**
- **Praise your child as often as you can. Children who feel good about themselves perform better in all their efforts.**





Reporting Periods

All schools distribute report cards and progress reports on a regular basis. Report cards are issued a few days after a six weeks has ended. In most grades, these are computer generated and document the academic grade in each class as well as a citizenship grade. Progress reports are usually sent home every three weeks; however, in some cases teachers may distribute them at other intervals depending on student performance. You are always welcome to call the teachers of your child and ask about their grades and how often you may expect a progress report.

Grading Periods for the 2000-2001 school year:

- 1st six weeks: August 9 – September 22
- 2nd six weeks: September 25 – November 3
- 3rd six weeks: November 6 – December 19
- 4th six weeks: January 3 – February 16
- 5th six weeks: February 19 – April 11
- 6th six weeks: April 17 – May 24

Please refer to the calendar on page 48 for any holidays or parent conference days which may fall during each grading period.

A report card is a valuable record of your child's performance. We encourage parents to discuss these reports with the child, remembering that grades are only one indication of a student's learning. By reviewing student work with your child, you will have a clearer idea of the learning that has occurred.

Teachers may periodically send student work home for your perusal. Often this work is kept in portfolios to document growth in learning over the course of the school year. By reviewing this work with your child, you will reinforce to the child the importance of receiving an excellent education and reaffirm your role as a teaching partner with educators.



What Parents Can Do to Support Their Children's Reading

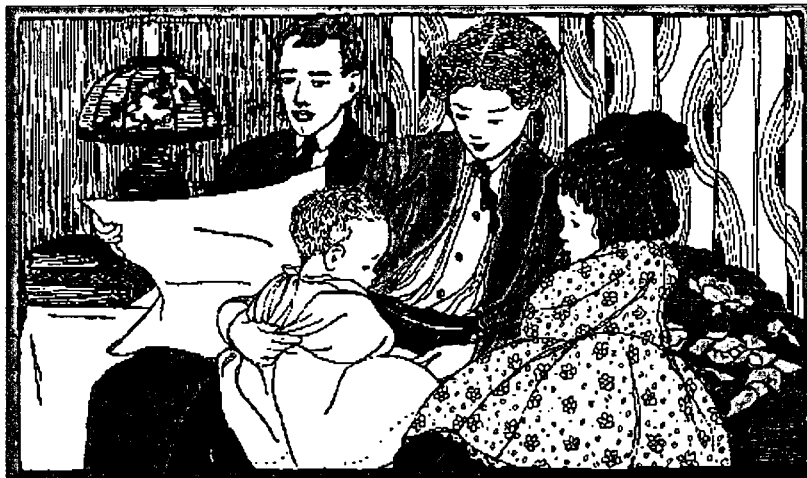
- Have plenty of reading material within easy reach in your home. Provide books, magazines, and newspapers on a variety of subjects.
- Make time for reading. Minimize the amount of time children spend watching television, talking on the phone, or playing video games. A recommended time for free reading is at least 20 minutes per day.
- Make space for reading. Provide a quiet place to read for pleasure.
- Visit libraries and book stores often. Help your children find selections that are appropriate for their age and interests.
- Ask your children to talk about what they are reading. Ask about the setting, the people involved, and the ideas present in the material. Show an interest.
- Tie in their reading with real life. If they read about sports, take them to games. If they read about history or science, take them to a museum. Show them how-to books; for example, how to identify poisonous plants or how to fix a leaky faucet.
- Don't criticize what they are reading or pressure them to read books they don't want to.
- A person is never too old to be read to. Read joke books, scary tales, or funny passages together. Reading aloud shows children what fun reading can be.
- Have children read aloud to you. If they stumble, let it go. The more they read, the better they are at reading, and the more they enjoy it.

Adapted from suggestions by the University of Illinois Center for the Study of Reading.



*Las medidas que los padres de familia pueden tomar
para poder apoyar a sus hijos con su lectura*

- Tener bastante material de lectura de facil acceso en su hogar. Proveerles libros, revistas y periodicos que contengan una variedad de temas.
- Hacer tiempo para leer. Siempre limiteles el tiempo a sus hijos o hijas para ver television, hablar por telefono, o jugar juegos de videos. Es recomendado leer 20 minutos minimo al dia.
- Apartar tiempo para leer y proveer un lugar callado y comodo.
- Frequentar librerias y tiendas de libros a menudo.
- Ayudar a sus hijos a buscar temas que sean apropiados para su edad e interes.
- Pregunteles a sus hijos acerca de lo que leyeron. Pregunteles de que se trato la historia, quienes son los personajes y que ideas tiene el material que leyeron. Muestre interes.
- Hablar de como lo que leyeron se puede aplicar en la vida real. Si lean acerca de deportes, llevelos a ver un partido. Si lean acerca de historia o ciencias, llevelos a un museo. Demuestreles libros de temas que ensenen “como hacer cosas por ti mismo” por ejemplo como identificar si una planta es venenosa, o como arreglar una tuberia rota.
- No critique lo que lean ni los presione a leer libros que no san de su agrado.
- Nadie es damasiado viejo para leer. Lean juntos libros de chistes, historias de terror o historias divertidas. Leer en voz alta les demuestra a los ninos que puede ser divertido.
- Ponga a sus hijos que lean en voz alta. Deja que atropiecen. Entre mas lean, mas ellos mejoraran su lectura, y disfrutaran hacerlo.



Parent Education Programs

The Parent Teacher Associations in the Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District have always collaborated with the district in providing parent education programs. To support their efforts and to assist our parents, a more formalized district Parent Education Program was established in 1987 in conjunction with the district's Partners for Youth Development program, which aided families in the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse. The district's Partners for Youth Development program is now the Student Assistance Program that continues to work on drug and alcohol education but also plays an integral role in our school safety efforts.

Through the district's Parent Education Program, educators share tools, techniques and skills that will support families in our rapidly changing society. They also provide parents with community support and an understanding of developmental stages and choices in positive parenting skills. Six years ago, our parent educators added Parent University to their repertoire. The university provided a smattering of parent training seminars.

Although the mission is the same, Parent University is now the **FISH (Family Implementing Successful Habits) Academy**. This academy is held in the fall of each year. Sessions are held in the evening and a light supper is served. Sample session topics include "Raising a Gifted Child," "Violence Prevention in Your Child's World," "Brain-Based Learning," and "Understanding Dangers Kids Face Today." The academy registration cost

is \$5 per family. For more information about the academy, parents may call 972-323-6515.

All parents living within the district boundaries are welcome to participate in any Parent Education program. Our parent educators never turn away anyone interested in a class unless a seminar is full because of limited space. Led by a district parent educator or a guest speaker, most classes are offered at no charge in English and Spanish and child care is available.

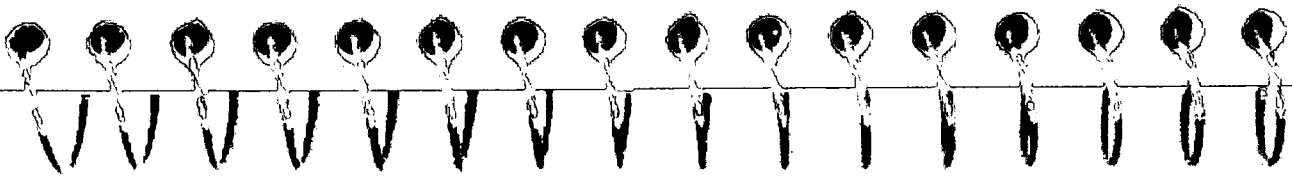
The parent educators also offer a number of special support groups and sessions. An ADD/ADHD support group meets monthly. Parents interested in the locations and dates for these groups should contact parent educator Ruth Feldman at 972-323-5940. Weekly parenting classes on topics of interest to mothers of young children are offered at the district's Pre-Kindergarten Center at 3030 Fyke Road. Weekly computer classes and other parenting seminars are offered at various locations. Contact the Parent Education Office at 972-323-6515 for more information.

By working hand-in-hand, parents and teachers see an increase in student achievement. At the same time, parents and communities benefit from the involvement and participation in the parent education programs.



Appendix B

***A Presentation
For
Administrators
To Improve
Parent Involvement in
The Schools***



Partners for Learning: An Administrator's Guide to Increasing Parent Involvement

In the
Carrollton- Farmers Branch Independent School
District

True or False:

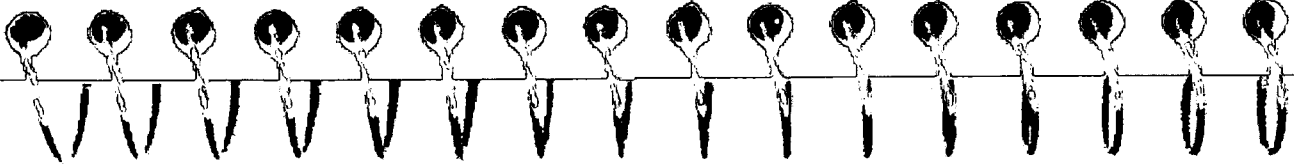
- ✓ Parents are not as involved in their children's education at the middle and high school levels as in the elementary years.
- ✓ The greatest predictor of student achievement is family income.
- ✓ Smaller schools are safer than larger ones.
- ✓ Hispanic mothers participate in school activities when encouraged to do so.



How did you do?

✓ True. Various studies show that by the time a child has reached sixth grade, only half of the parents attend one school meeting a year.

✓ True. Upper class families are more engaged in school activities; hence, their children tend to perform better.



✓ True. Smaller schools allow teachers, parents, and students to get to know each other well, thereby increasing safety in the school.

✓ True. An analysis of 42 projects nationwide revealed Hispanic mothers tend to become full partners in the education of their children when encouraged to do so.

Family Involvement and Student Achievement

The mutual benefits of family involvement

✓ *Students benefit by:*

- ◇ Higher grades
- ◇ Better attendance and homework completion
- ◇ More positive attitudes
- ◇ Higher graduation rate
- ◇ Greater enrollment in college

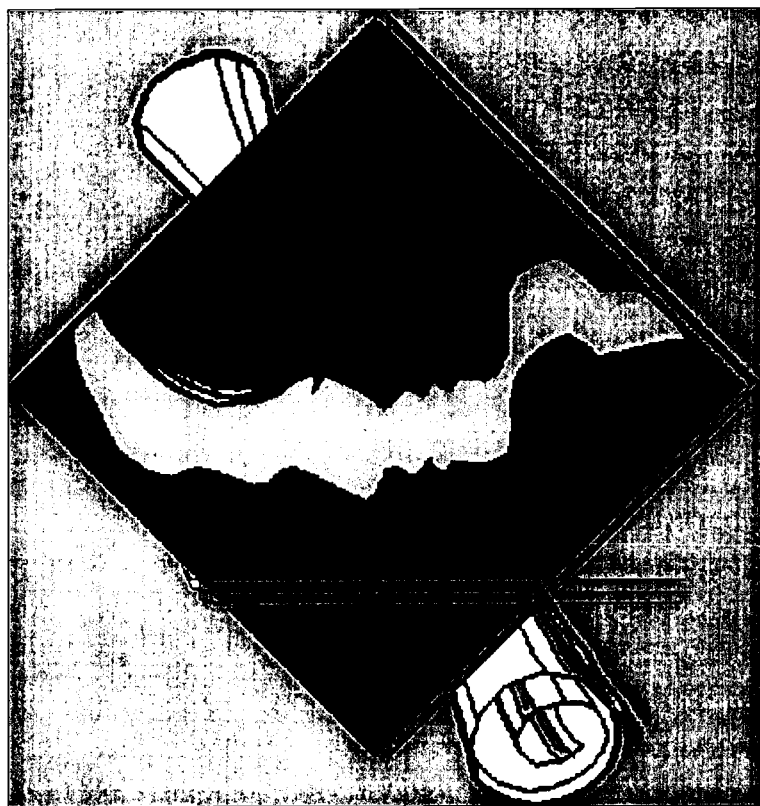
✓ *Schools benefit by:*

- ◇ Improved teacher morale
- ◇ Higher ratings of schools by parents
- ◇ More support from families
- ◇ Better reputations in the community

Source: United States Department of Education

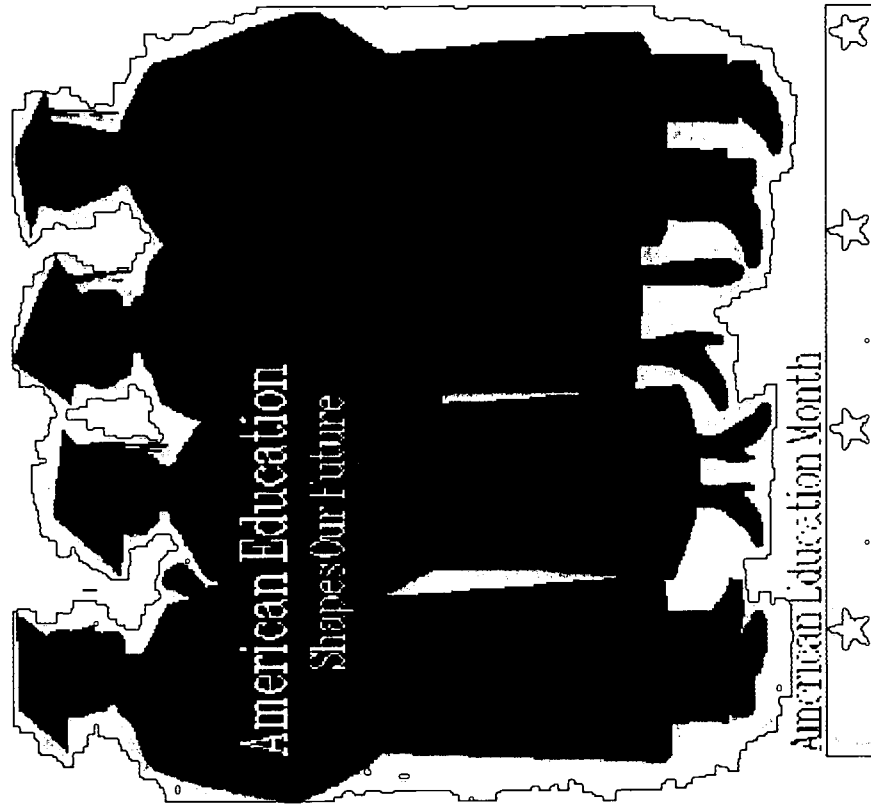
According to the United States Department of Education.....

Nearly 75% of
students think
that it is a good
idea for parents
to be involved in
their children's
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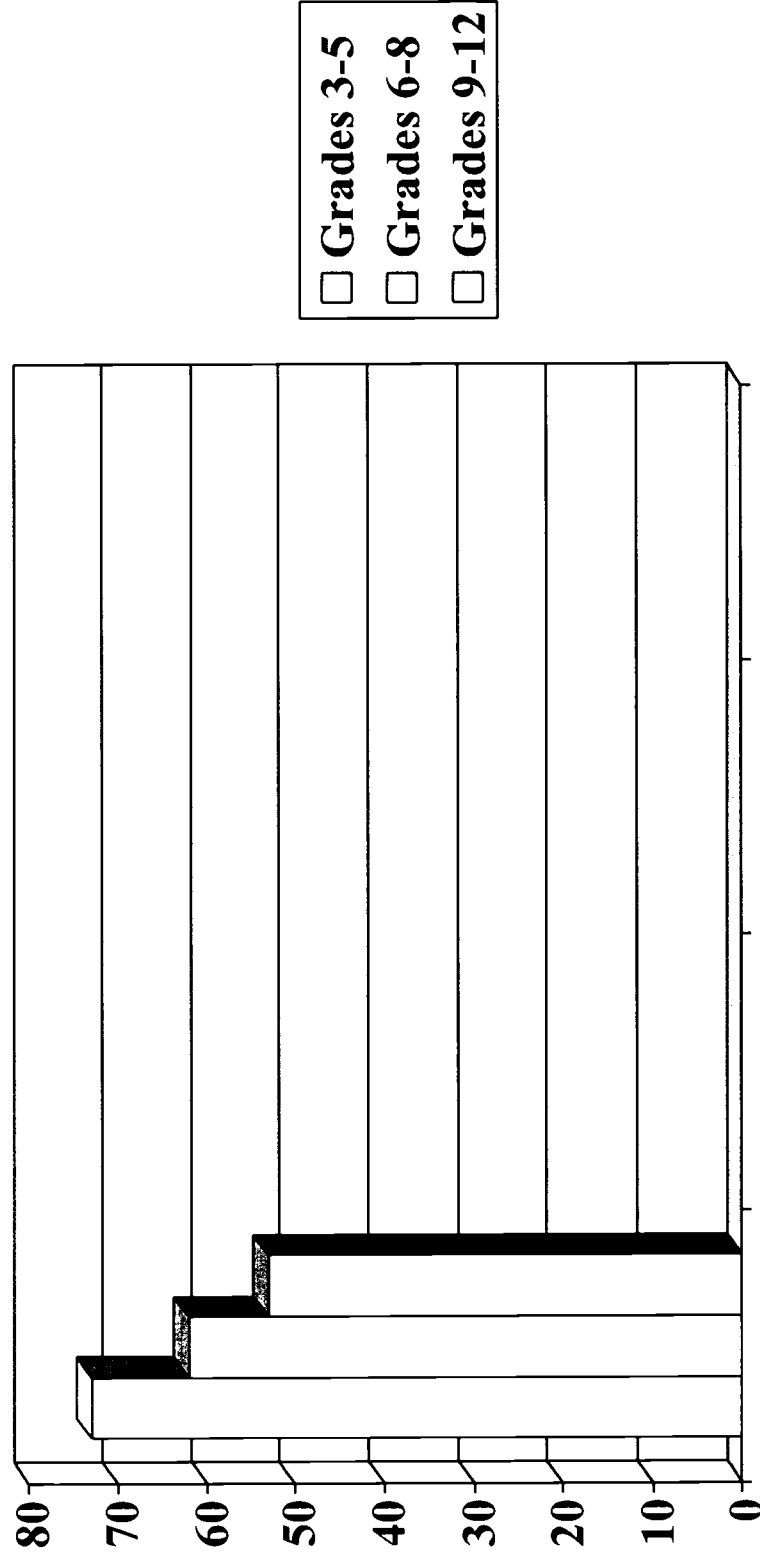


According to teachers....

The single most
important thing
public schools
need to help
students learn is
involved parents.



Fall-Off of Parent Involvement in Middle and High School



What can educators do to
improve parent involvement at all
levels of a child's education?

The National PTA has set these standards for successful parent involvement:

✓ Communication:

Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.

✓ Parenting: Parenting

skills are promoted and supported.

✓ Student Learning:

Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

✓ Volunteering: Parents

are welcome in the school and their support and assistance are sought.

✓ School decision-making and advocacy:
Parents are full partners in decisions that affect children and families.

✓ Collaborating with community:
Community resources strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

Source: National Parent Teacher Association

Administrators and teachers must:

✓ Clarify how and why parents can be involved.

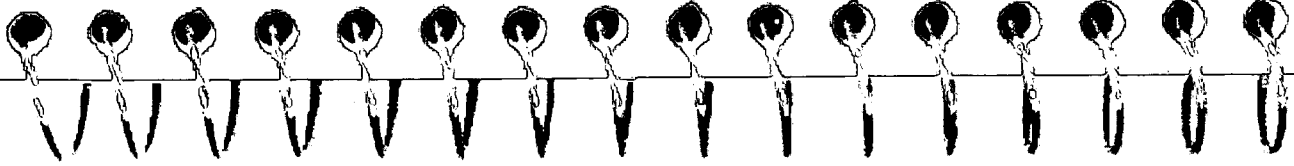
Many parents do not know how to initiate involvement in their children's school. Schools must clarify the available opportunities for parents and explain how their involvement can positively affect their children's academic success.

✓ Provide parents with positive feedback about their children.

To most parents, calls or notes from their children's school indicate a problem. Administrators and teachers should let parents know when their children are doing well.

✓ Build on existing parent involvement.

Many parents attend back-to-school night and school programs in which their children are involved. Educators must extend invitations at that time for other types of involvement.



✓ Examine school policies that act as barriers to parent involvement.

Each school should form a team comprising of parents and teachers to discuss existing barriers to parent involvement and how to overcome them.

✓ Inform parents of behavioral and academic problems in a timely fashion.

Parents often feel educators wait too long before notifying them of problems. Have a formal policy about when and how to notify parents or potential problems.

✓ Offer ongoing professional support and training for staff in working with families.

Administrators and teachers may well need training and support to maximize their interaction with families and make school a welcome place.

Recommendations Administrators Can Make to Parents:

✓ Tell parents to be informed about policies and programs.

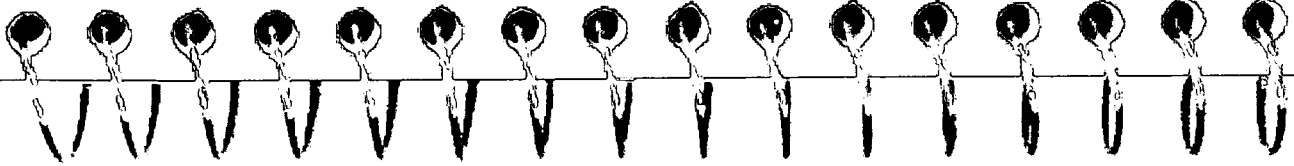
For example, most schools have committees for reviewing school policies and practices in which parents can participate.

✓ Encourage parents to be decision-makers.

Many schools are mandated to provide parents with opportunities to be advisers and decision makers for school matters.

✓ Challenge parents to help their children with homework.

Teachers should provide parents with information on how to oversee homework. Many teachers provide their e-mail addresses and phone numbers so that parents can contact them with questions about their assignments.



✓ Tell parents you will listen to them.

Conduct surveys and focus groups to better understand parents' needs and feelings regarding school policies and practices. Make sure that they share their ideas in constructive and useful ways to those who are in a position to improve parent involvement practices.

✓ Ask parents to show their children they value learning.

Research lends support to the fact that when parents have high expectations, children succeed in school. Tell parents to let their children know that they value learning and that what happens in school is important. This includes having the parents show they respect teachers as valued professionals who help children achieve important goals.

•Source: Parents As School Partners, National Council of Jewish Women, Center for the Child

In Carrollton-Farmers Branch.....

Many schools have a high number of parents who do not speak English. It is very important to have at least one, if not several, members of your staff who are prepared to speak with those parents in their native tongue. In rare cases, students can be used to interpret if the language is one that few persons speak. It is important to make positive contact with ALL parents.

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Many families live in low-income, government-subsidized apartments. These parents are less likely to come to the school and become involved. Attempt to hold meetings for them on their “home turf” by conducting the meetings in apartment community rooms or nearby facilities such as community centers or churches.

In Carrollton-Farmers Branch.....

Remember.....our mission statement is “We believe that ALL children can learn.” In order to accomplish that goal, we must do our best to involve the parents in their children’s education, not as a spectator, but as an active player in the game of learning.

ADMINISTRATOR COPY

As the PowerPoint presentation was viewed, administrators could follow along with their own copy of the presentation. The next few pages contain the slides and spaces where administrators could take notes beside each slide if they wished. This feature allowed them to have a tangible copy of the presentation for future reference.

Partners for Learning: An Administrator's Guide to Increasing Parent Involvement

In the
Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School
District

True or False:

- ✓ Parents are not as involved in their children's education at the middle and high school levels as in the elementary years.
- ✓ The greatest predictor of student achievement is family income.
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- ✓ True. Various studies show that by the time a child has reached sixth grade, only half of the parents attend one school meeting a year.
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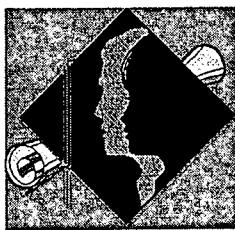
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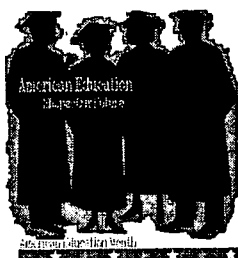
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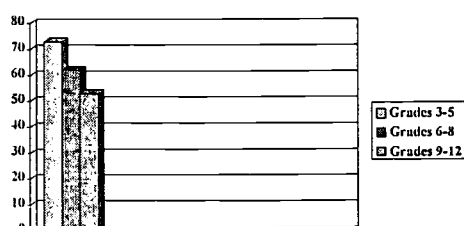


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The single most important thing public schools need to help students learn is involved parents.



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- | | |
|---|---|
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Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.</p> <p>✓ <u>Volunteering:</u> Parents are welcome in the school and their support and assistance are sought.</p> |
|---|---|

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>✓ <u>School decision-making and advocacy:</u>
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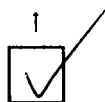
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